

# About our Heritage



## Rich in History

Culpeper Baptist Church rests on the foundation of many courageous and committed men and women throughout its 240 year history. Culpeper Baptist was originally founded in 1774 as Mount Poney Baptist Church by David Thomas and Nathaniel Saunders. Prior to establishing Mount Poney Baptist Church, Nathaniel Saunders was threatened with imprisonment in 1770 if he preached in Culpeper. He eventually was arrested in 1773 and imprisoned in the Culpeper jail located on Davis Street. At least 9 other men were arrested along with Saunders for preaching the gospel without a license. These passionate, God-fearing men believed they did not need a license to preach because they were called by God himself.

Later, John Leland became pastor of Mount Poney from 1777-1779. Leland was baptized in 1774 and joined a Baptist Church in Bellingham, Massachusetts in 1775. He left for Virginia in 1775 and ministered there until 1791, when he returned to his home town in Massachusetts. We have the First Amendment of the Constitution in large part, due to the efforts of American Baptists such as John Leland. Leland had petitioned his Virginia legislator, James Madison, directly regarding his concern for the need to ensure religious liberty in the new country. Since Baptists represented a significant portion of the vote in Madison's district, and Leland being a prominent Baptist preacher of the



Leland- Madison Memorial.  
"Courageous Leader of the Baptist Doctrine"

19th century, Leland threatened to take Madison's seat in the House of Representatives. This threat by Leland resulted in a personal visit from Madison. The two came to an agreement that Leland would not run for Madison's seat and Madison agreed to campaign for Leland and his fellow Baptist's concerns for religious freedom. Madison kept his word and pushed for the Bill of Rights. Without Leland and Baptist involvement, it is possible we would not have the religious liberty that we experience today.



Mount Poney Baptist Church was named after its location to the mountain two miles southeast of town. The site of the church was not far from the base of the hill. The land was deeded by Reuben Long to Anthony Foster and James Jett and is the place where the Baptist meeting house was already erected and known by the name of "Mount Poney Meeting House." In 1822, Dr. Marcus Buck offered the church a piece of land near Bell's Ford on Mountain Run for The Baptist Meeting House. On November 10, 1832 the following action took place: "ordered by the church that it is expedient that the Baptist denomination should have a meeting house at the Culpeper Court House on the land lately given by Dr. Buck for that purpose." Almost a year later a resolution was passed to constitute the two churches out of the Mount Poney Church:

Stevensburg and one at the Culpeper Court House which is still known as Mount Poney to this day.

In February 1856 the congregation decided to build a new church for Mount Poney, the third Mount Poney, and to sell the church at Bell's Ford. After the tragic death of Dr. Winfrey, Pastor J.T. Edwards came to CBC in 1931 and served as Pastor until 1947. During this time, 750 members were added to the congregation. J.T. Edwards also led the founding of the Virginia Baptist Home, a ministry for senior adults that is still active today. More than 247 baptisms occurred during the years of 1889-1931 while E.W. Winfrey was Pastor. Many evangelists preached here during several revivals. Dr. Winfrey pastored at Culpeper Baptist for 42 years and was said to have died in the pulpit while preaching. Culpeper Baptist

Church was erected in 1859 but was destroyed by fire in April, 1892. After the dark days of the Civil War and the struggle to keep the church alive, the church voted in 1873 to change its name to Culpeper Baptist Church. The church was once again relocated after the fire of 1892 to Davis Street, which is now the Free Gospel Church of Christ. While hosting the 1876 convention of the Baptist General Association of Virginia the Virginia Baptist Historical Society was organized.

As the church continued to grow in membership beyond the building's capacity, Alice Booton, Dr. Winfrey's daughter sold CBC the current location on South West Street.



In 1958, John Farrar became Pastor and led the church until his retirement in 1984. There were many improvements made to the organization of the church through the Farrar years and the Sanctuary that stands today was completed. In 1976 a "Spiritual Lay Renewal" took place that brought many people to the saving knowledge of Jesus. John Farrar was not only an integral leader in the history of Culpeper Baptist Church but was also known as the "Pastor of Culpeper." Farrar was well known for his commanding preaching style. "When he conducted a funeral or a wedding, you could hear him without a hearing aide in any part of the church, and he had the memory of an elephant. He could remember everything about you and your family." Farrar was an active member of the

Virginia Baptist Historical Society and is remembered as a great man and great Pastor. Read more about the life of John Farrar [here](#).

Herbert O. Browning served ten years at CBC from 1985-1995. During his time the church buildings were renovated and new offices were constructed through the participation of the congregation in the "Together We Build" campaign. In March of 1996, Ted W. Fuson came to pastor Culpeper Baptist and immediately began to listen to the congregation's desire to experience renewed growth and spiritual power. During Dr. Fuson's leadership the church voted in 2005 to proceed with plans to expand facilities and to begin a capital fund raising campaign. This campaign resulted in a new Worship Center, Courtyard, and Child Development Center Daycare classrooms.

After the retirement of Dr. Fuson, Reverend Bruce Queen and Robert Lewis served as interim pastors until the arrival of [Rev. Daniel Carlton](#) in August 2014.

Currently Culpeper Baptist houses two worship services, Sunday school classes, an expanding Child Development Daycare program, Korean and Spanish services, as well as providing worship space for the congregations of City on a Hill Church and The Love Church. In addition, CBC partners with and provides meeting space for other local organizations and provides food to the Community Food Closet. Culpeper Baptist is excited and blessed to celebrate the past 240 years and looks forward to many more years to come!